
LEX

Project report

February 2005

This is the second project report from the LEX project, covering the period from August 2005 to end January 2006.

Project management

Staffing

Kathy Trinder has been appointed by GCU and has joined the project. Other project team members are Linda Creanor (GCU), Doug Gowan and Carol Howells (both OLP). All project team members are involved in data collection and analysis. In addition to this course team Terry Mayes of GCU is assisting with a number of consultancy days, largely around questions of methodology.

Project plan

The project plan is now in version 1.3. The workplan being followed is that shown in the project plan, attached as appendix 1. There are no major variations to the work packages and we expect to cover the range of learners and institutions outlined in the project plan, at a wide range of locations in the UK. We anticipate however that due to the intensive nature of the IPA methodology the volume of individual interviews may be less than planned. For practical reasons we have had to keep the list of participating organisations under semi-continuous review.

Working methods

Project communications are handled in a number of ways:

- regular telephone conferences are held to progress the project and discuss emerging issues. Agendas are held on a live web collaboration system and action points are now captured live.
- occasional face to face meetings are held in London or Glasgow
- the project website set up in Moodle has now been extended to carry transcripts and emerging analysis.
- interview and focus group recording has now been standardised on DSS files. These files are however too large for the website.

Methodology

In this period the project has made considerable progress on developing, refining and testing the core methodology for the project. We have built closely on the work of the Scoping Study Final Report, particularly through the use of an Interview Plus

technique. A key step has been adoption of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach and development of that approach for the LEX context. Development of the approach has been evolutionary and has involved:

- early pilot interviews and focus groups, using a semi structured interview format in conjunction with interview plus.
- two methodology workshops, with the assistance of Paul Flowers, a leading exponent and developer of the IPA approach. The first workshop focused on questioning techniques and the second on IPA coding and analytical techniques.
- revised guidelines for interview handling in the light of the IPA investigation.
- piloting the rigorous IPA analytical approach and developing a teamwork approach to analysis.

Evolution of the project methodology has been outlined in the team paper (circulated) for the forthcoming Networked Learning conference: *The learner's voice: a focus on the e-learner experience*.

Key contacts

The project key contact list is frequently updated and is available on the Moodle site. Additions have been made following suggestions from the JISC project teams and others, together with a number of unsolicited expressions of interest from people who have seen the project description and contact details on websites or email circulations, with inputs from the JISC team, the scoping study team and the project tender. The key contact list is iterative since we need to balance contact availability and practicality with the need to cover a range of sectors and geographical areas.

Research and data collection

This is a brief outline of planned completed research subjects and data collection activities:

Course /institution/ learners	mode of learning/ICT	comments
Adult part time learners on TUC union representatives course - 3 interviews	Fully online, no face to face elements. UK - wide course	Completed
Adult part time work based and community learners in learning centre on hospital Trust site - 2 focus groups	Personalised learning, drop-in access to centre, online tests	Completed
Adult part time learner in hospital learning centre - 1 interview	Personalised learning, online tests in literacy	Completed Selected from focus group
Adult ESOL learners in Tower Hamlets College - 1 focus group	Classroom and study visit use of tablet PCs for language development	Completed. Follow up interviews planned

Adult ESOL learners in Tower Hamlets College – 2 interviews	Classroom and study visit use of tablet PCs for language development	Planned in next 2-3 weeks
Warwick University – mixed group of users of Learning Grid environment – 1 focus group	User – controlled Learning Grid environment, learner focused support services	Planned end February
Warwick University – mixed group of users of Learning Grid environment – 2 interviews	User – controlled Learning Grid environment, learner focused support services	Planned early March
Belfast Institute – mixed group of full/part time learners in a variety of curriculum areas - 1 focus group	Mixed ICT classroom and online support	Planned early March
Belfast Institute – mixed group of full/part time learners in a variety of curriculum areas – 2 interviews	Mixed ICT classroom and online support	Planned early March
Glasgow Caledonian University (HE) - First year Economics. Full time. Mixed ages. Students kept a blog on use of technology for two weeks (used as artefact). Followed up by 4 interviews.	Campus based, lecturers use rich mix of media and use of vle.	Completed
Strathclyde University (HE) - Law diploma students (Have already completed 4 year law degree). Full time. Mixed ages. 4 interviews.	Online, multimedia, video lectures & tutorial based.	Completed (will be by Thursday anyway!)
Reid Kerr & Cardonald local colleges consortium (FE), SFC BlendEd project. Mixed group of full/part time learners in Business and Social Care . 2 focus groups followed by interviews.	Mixed ICT classroom and online support . Uses learning objects developed as part of the transformational BlendEd project. Will inform project evaluation	Planned next 2-3 weeks (first focus group 20 th Feb).
Hereward – learners with disabilities. Mixed group of full/part time learners in a variety of curriculum areas.	Diverse range of assistive technologies	Planned early March
Lancaster University – adult learners on entrepreneurship programme	Mixed mode programme with extensive use of e-portfolios / learning logs	Planned mid March

Reports and dissemination

There are as yet no early findings from the project as data collection is continuing and data analysis is at an early stage.

We have however made available and continue to plan progress reports on the project and its methodology:

- Pedagogy experts meetings in October 2005 and February 2006
- JISC online conference, Innovating e-Learning 2006: Transforming learning experiences, March 2006
- Networked Learning Conference April 2006 – project paper accepted
- HEA conference Summer 2006 – joint presentation with other JISC pedagogy projects planned
- ALT-C September 2006 – contribution to JISC session planned

Next report

No further project reports are planned. Further discussions with the JISC project team will be scheduled in March to discuss the final stages of the project, dissemination and outputs, and potential follow up.

